



2004 Progress Report

About the ReStore

Our Diverse Mission

The ReStore, located in Springfield, Massachusetts, accepts donations of high-quality but unwanted home improvement materials and sells them to low-income homeowners and others. Our inventory includes used and salvaged materials and surplus stock from the building industry. We accept donated items from homeowners, contractors, manufacturers, retailers and municipal recycling centers.

Our mission is much broader than just selling building materials. The ReStore's mission is to:

- reuse valuable materials
- make home improvement affordable for more people
- create local jobs and provide job training

Managing the ReStore

The ReStore is a nonprofit enterprise of the Center for Ecological Technology (CET), a 27-year-old nonprofit 501(c)(3) community-based environmental organization with offices in Northampton and Pittsfield.

As a nonprofit organization, the ReStore does not generate profits for owners or stockholders as traditional businesses do. Instead, any profits are reinvested into the ReStore or other CET activities that benefit the community.

Our customers love to visit the ReStore for affordable, quality building materials.

How Far We've Come

Expanding the ReStore

The ReStore is part of the Gasoline Alley Foundation complex in Springfield's McKnight neighborhood and is an integral part of this area's revitalization.

Since we opened our doors in September 2001, we have worked hard to create an economically productive, comfortable retail space for our customers. We started with a 3,200 square-foot building that originally contained a dilapidated oil-truck garage, an abandoned wood shop and a waste-cluttered parking lot and yard space. We made this location work for us, but as customer demand for our products grew, so did our need for more space.

After several months of renovation, in June 2003, the ReStore expanded into the building next door, adding 5,000 square-feet of indoor space. A special thanks to **Staples** for providing all of the shelving and counters for our new space, and to **Hardware Specialities** for new doors for both buildings.

The expansion has allowed us to keep more building materials out of the landfill and to offer a wider selection of products to ReStore customers.

Building a Strong Customer Base

In 2003, the ReStore served over 5,000 area residents and increased sales by approximately 90%.

Our customers are very diverse racially and socioeconomically, and many are repeat visitors. We are enjoying getting to know our "regulars" and are building a sense of community around the ReStore.



Creating Community Benefits

Making Home Improvement Affordable

The building materials we receive from donors are of excellent quality, and we can offer them to our customers at 50-70% off the new retail price, making home improvement more affordable.

“I’m a committed recycler and I didn’t want these things to end up in the dump when someone else can use them.”

—A ReStore Donor

Customers tell us they are impressed with

our low prices and with the inventory available, which is essential to ensuring return visits.

This year we served over 5,000 people, saving them an estimated \$220,000.

Our donors win too. Many have told us how pleased they are with the



opportunity to save useful materials, avoid disposal costs and, in some cases, receive a tax deduction.

Protecting the Environment

When we collect and sell used building materials at the ReStore, we prevent those materials from being landfilled. Reuse of materials provides significant environmental benefits: Not only do we save landfill space, but we also diminish the need for new natural resources to be mined and harvested to manufacture new building materials.

Creating Jobs and Training Opportunities

For most of 2003, the ReStore employed seven people, for a total of six full-time equivalents (FTE). In the winter months, we reduce our staffing somewhat to compensate for the seasonal slowdown in construction and renovation work, and then increase it again in the spring.

The ReStore provides job training opportunities through the AmeriCorps*VISTA national service program. In 2003, our second round of AmeriCorps*VISTA members “graduated.” One returned to his home state to seek a position in the building materials field. Another is now pursuing a graduate degree in architecture. Our first AmeriCorps*VISTA member remains a key full-time employee at the ReStore.

Building Community Partnerships

We continue to build and strengthen partnerships with a variety of organizations and individuals in the community. For example, the ReStore is working with HAP, Inc. to get word of our affordable materials out to those who need them most. HAP distributes our information in a variety of ways, including through their first-time home buyer classes, which are taught in English and Spanish. “We are very pleased to have this excellent resource to offer to first-time home buyers,” says Deb Broaden, Director of Housing Services.

“Thanks to the ReStore, I can afford to fix up my home.”

—A ReStore Customer

We also have a strong relationship with the **City of Springfield**. The City’s Department of Public Works

From the Top: The ReStore sells all kinds of building materials. Middle Left: Our volunteers and supporters have contributed immensely to our success. Middle Right: Our creative street sign tells visitors they are in the right place. Lower Middle: Our friendly staff help shoppers find what they need. Bottom: We pick up larger donations with the ReStore truck.

has helped us in many ways, including agreeing to store several zero-emission GEM vehicles (electric “golf-carts”) that the ReStore received. The ReStore is donating two of these to the City for its use in making city operations more environmentally friendly.

The ReStore is actively working with these organizations and individuals in our community:

- Homebuilders Association of Western Massachusetts
- National Association of the Remodeling Industry
- Habitat for Humanity (Northwest Connecticut, Pioneer Valley, Springfield and Westfield)
- Goodwill Industries
- HAP, Inc.
- City of Springfield
- Area Municipal Building Inspectors
- Area Recycling Coordinators
- Gasoline Alley Foundation
- Many others too numerous to mention

Volunteers: Contributing to Our Success



John Symanski of John Symanski Materials Handling Service is one of the ReStore's stellar volunteers.

The ReStore is lucky to have the assistance of many talented volunteers. One person in particular, **John Symanski**, has made a significant contribution to our success. John has done everything from installing and fixing doors and racking and improving security, to sourcing and maintaining our forklift and pallet jack and providing all types of expert advice and referrals.

His skills and experience, combined with his dedication and enthusiasm for our mission, make him truly invaluable. Thank you, John. We couldn't do it without you!



The ReStore stocks materials for every room in the house.

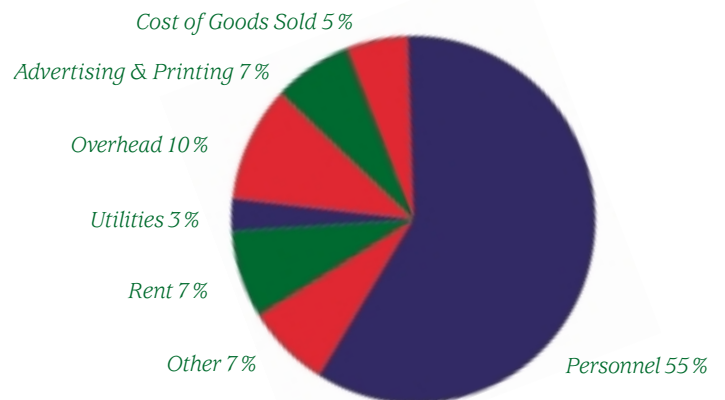
ReStore by the Numbers

Figures are from November 2002-October 2003

5,000	<i>Number of Customers Served</i>
900	<i>Number of Materials Donors</i>
100's	<i>Tons of Building Materials Saved from Disposal in Landfills</i>
6	<i>Full-time Equivalents (FTE) employed by the ReStore</i>
3	<i>AmeriCorps*VISTA Members Receiving Job Training</i>
\$180,000	<i>Sales Revenue</i>
\$400,000	<i>Estimated Retail Value of Materials if Sold as New</i>

The ReStore's Operating Expenses

\$216,500 in FY 2002-2003



The ReStore's Future: Growth and Financial Independence

Working Toward Self-Sufficiency

In 2003, sales covered 75% of our operating costs, an increase from 66% last year. Unlike a for-profit business that relies on an owner's assets or commercial loans to cover expenses, the ReStore has relied on grant funding to cover its remaining expenses.

We anticipate that sales revenues will fully cover operating costs in the coming year, as originally planned. Rather than using grant funds for operating

We anticipate that sales revenue will cover our operating expenses in the coming year.

expenses, we will be able to use grants for any additional expansions or substantial new initiatives.

In order to achieve self-sufficiency, the ReStore will need to increase total annual sales by approximately 50%, to \$270,000 annually. We believe this is a challenging but achievable goal.

The Challenges Ahead

As the ReStore continues to grow, we must increase both the pace and type of donations received. We must also increase customer demand for those items. Extensive outreach and advertising will continue to be a priority in the coming year. We hope to double our established "pipeline" of approximately 100 commercial donors (contractors, retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers) in 2004 and to establish a routine outreach program that continually reaches new one-time donors, primarily homeowners.

New Initiatives in the Works

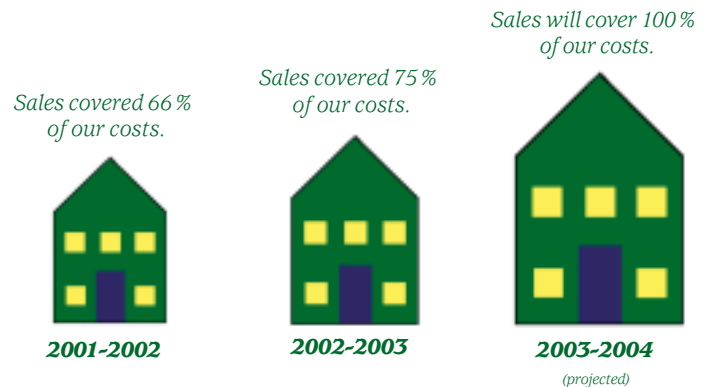
Now that our primary facility and operations have been established, we will develop a variety of initiatives over the next year. These include changing the outside yard space into a more productive retail area; creating a staff training program, including documented store procedures and product information; creating a customer education program, including safe lead practices and how-to information resources; and launching a new website and customer email outreach program.

We are also investigating the potential for expanding ReStore activities to include deconstruction (the removal of materials before remodeling or demolition), a service that could create several new jobs and provide another source of inventory.

Our sales are growing each year.



As we grow, we are relying more on sales and less on grants to cover our costs.



We offer our grateful thanks to the following funders of the ReStore:

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
The Lawson Valentine Foundation
The Frank Stanley Beveridge Foundation
U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration
Chelsea Center for Recycling and Economic Development
The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation
The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
The Xeric Foundation
The Home Builders Association of Western Massachusetts